



### Sheridan Region

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Sheridan: Bruce Scigliano

Buffalo: Jim Seeman

Kaycee: Grant Gerharter

N. Gillette: Jackie Otto

S. Gillette: Dustin Kirsch

Moorcroft: J.D. Davis

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Damage Tech: Joe Weyant

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Buffalo: Dan Thiele

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**Fish Biologists:**

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Aquatic Habitat: Travis Cundy

**Habitat and Access Coordinator:**

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**Aquatic Invasive Species:**

Greg Downey

**Story Fish Hatchery:**

Superintendent: Steve Diekema

Senior Fish Culturist: Brad Hughes

Culturist: Jennifer Meineke

**Sheridan Bird Farm:**

Supervisor: Darrell Meineke

Biologist: Nate Brown

Technician: Kurt Heiser

# Wyoming Game and Fish Department

## Sheridan Region

### February 2016 Newsletter

#### Fish Passage on Pratt & Ferris Ditch



*View of the baffling in the vertical slot fish ladder.*



*View of where the fish that have come up the ladder will exit above the diversion dam.*

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Apache Foundation, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are partnering to build a dual vertical slot fish ladder and rotating drum fish screen at the Pratt and Ferris #1 dam and diversion on Piney Creek. The dam occurs about 2.5 miles above Piney Creek's confluence with Clear Creek. Brown and rainbow trout, rock bass, stonecat, longnose dace, longnose and white sucker, and shorthead redhorse occur in the project reach. The fish ladder combined with the previous ramped diversion structure completed at the Dunlap Diversion on Piney Creek will reconnect about 30 contiguous miles of Piney and Clear creeks. The drum screen will limit fish entrainment in the 18 to 24 cfs Pratt and Ferris #1 diversion ditch. DRM Incorporated began constructing the fish ladder and screen in late November. Completion is expected in March 2016.

This project addresses another step in the Game and Fish Department's goal to reconnect Clear and Piney Creeks to the Powder River. Other native fishes considered species of greatest conservation need cannot yet reach the mouth of Piney Creek due to remaining barriers on Clear Creek.



*View of the floor of the rotating drum fish screen that will prevent fish from being lost down the irrigation ditch.*



*View from downstream of the fish ladder looking upstream at the ladder.*



# Sheridan Region Monthly Newsletter

## February 2016

### Law Enforcement Efforts Continue Along Sheridan County's Northern Border



*One of two white-tailed deer that were poached along the Wyoming/Montana border in January.*

Wyoming Game and Fish Department game wardens from several areas around the state took turns patrolling the northwest part of Sheridan County in January. The increased poaching of big game animals reported in 2015 continued into 2016 as game wardens worked on a case involving an individual who poached a white-tailed deer along the Wyoming/Montana border. Prompt investigative work by wardens lead to a quick identification of the suspect. The suspect was interviewed and also confessed to poaching an additional white-tailed deer. Charges are currently pending against the suspect.



*Bullet recovered from a big game animal poached along the Wyoming/Montana border in January.*



*A Wyoming Game Warden collects evidence near the Wyoming/Montana border where one white-tailed deer had been shot and left.*





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### Moorcroft Game Warden Teaches Ice Rescue Class

Moorcroft Game Warden John Davis taught an ice rescue class to 17 people representing the Hulett Fire Dept., Sundance Police Dept., Moorcroft Police Dept., Crook County Sheriff's Office, Keyhole State Park, as well as the Wyoming Game and Fish Dept. The class was held at Keyhole Reservoir near the marina boat docks where agitators keep the water from freezing. The weather was ideal for the class. All those attending the class had an opportunity to get into the Mustang Survival suits to practice going into the frigid water to rescue a "victim" as well as being a "victim".



*A rescuer crawls out to the "victim" during the ice rescue training taught at Keyhole Reservoir.*



*A second rescuer (yellow suit on right) wearing a Mustang Survival suit carefully approaches the "rescued victim" with a sled to transport the "victim" to safety.*

### Story Hatchery Ships the Last of Eggs Taken During the Fall of 2015



*Eggs being stripped from a brook trout at Story Fish Hatchery.*

The last of the eggs taken during the fall spawning of 2015 at Story Fish Hatchery were shipped to other locations in January. The State of Idaho received 44,000 brook trout eggs, while another 54,000 brook trout eggs were shipped to the Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery in Kentucky.

After all in-state commitments are satisfied, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department trades fish eggs and fish to other state and federal fish hatcheries for fish that the Wyoming Game and Fish Department does not raise. Fish such as channel catfish, walleye, tiger musky and northern pike are obtained through these trades for stocking in Wyoming waters.



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## February 2016

### Elk Surveys Completed in January

Wyoming Game and Fish Department Sheridan Region wildlife biologists completed winter elk trend surveys in January. The effects of a dry and mild 2015 fall hunting season contributed to harvest objectives not being met, resulting in increased elk numbers in several of the herds surveyed.

Wildlife managers utilize trend surveys to count as many elk as possible to provide an indication of the population trends. Obviously, not all elk are counted, but with favorable survey conditions (snow cover) a high percentage of the elk can be observed. These trend counts are flown with either a small airplane or helicopter. A digital camera is used to obtain images of the larger herds. The photographs are then downloaded to a computer and the number of elk are tallied.

Hunt areas near Buffalo and Kaycee showed increases this year with Hunt Area 33 tallying 1,671 elk, Hunt Area 34—1,738 elk, Hunt Area 35—1,179 elk and Hunt Area 36—1,069 elk. Hunting seasons being planned for 2016 in these hunt areas are expected to have increased opportunity as a result of this year's counts.



*Digital photo (at left) of a herd of elk in the southeast part of the Bighorn Mountains.*

*The same photo as above after being downloaded onto a computer and the number of elk tallied using Arc GIS software. As a colored dot is placed on each elk with a click of the computer mouse, the GIS program records the number in the table seen on the right side of the photo.*

*Although difficult to see, the number on the bottom line (red arrow) is 582, so there are 582 elk in that herd.*

